

AO 91 (Rev. 08/09) Criminal Complaint

United States District Court
Southern District of Texas
FILED

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Southern District of Texas

FEB 02 2015

Clerk of Court

United States of America)

01 Ernesto CRUZ-Roman YOB: 1980 Citizenship: Mexico)

Case No. M-15-0153-M

02 Crystal Bernice RODRIGUEZ YOB: 1988 Citizenship: USA)

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of January 30, 2015 in the county of Hidalgo in the
Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

8 U.S.C. § 1324 (a)(1)(A)(iii)

Offense Description

Knowing and in reckless disregard of the fact that Urania Elizabeth Ramos-Lizama, was an alien, who had come to, entered and remained in the United States in violation of law, conceals, harbors, or shields from detection, or attempts to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection, such alien in any place, including any building or any means of transportation; to wit a residence in Penitas, Texas.

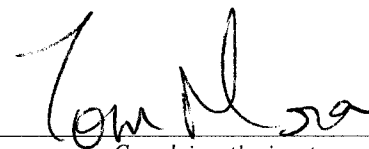

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

SEE ATTACHMENT "A"

✓ Continued on the attached sheet.

Approved to file Kimberly Ann Leo
AUSA

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 2/2/2015City and state: McAllen, Texas
Complainant's signatureTomas Mora, HSI Special Agent
Printed name and title
Judge's signatureU.S. Magistrate Judge Dorina Ramos
Printed name and title

ATTACHMENT A

On January 29, 2015, Homeland Security Investigations, McAllen, Texas (HSI McAllen), encountered a female undocumented alien (UDA) from El Salvador named Urania Elizabeth Ramos-Lizama. Ramos-Lizama was referred to HSI McAllen after she made an outcry to local police officers concerning the conditions of her treatment while being harbored in the Rio Grande Valley.

Ramos-Lizama stated to agents that she illegally entered the United States from the United Mexican States in October 2014 with a group of UDAs but was ultimately separated from her group after they were spotted by United States Border Patrol Agents (BPAs). Ramos-Lizama stated she eluded the BPAs and walked in the brush by herself until she reached a residence where she asked a male subject, later identified as Ernesto CRUZ-Roman, for help. Ramos-Lizama stated that CRUZ-Roman offered to help her continue her smuggling attempt into the United States but that Ramos-Lizama would need to have family send him money. Ramos-Lizama stated her aunt sent CRUZ-Roman \$1,600 so that she could be smuggled to Houston, Texas. Ramos-Lizama stated CRUZ-Roman never made arrangements for her to be smuggled north and would make excuses whenever she asked when she would be leaving. Ramos-Lizama stated that while being harbored at CRUZ-Roman's residence, she was expected to cook, clean, and take care of CRUZ-Roman's children. Ramos-Lizama stated she didn't feel as if she could leave the residence due to not knowing the area nor knowing anybody in the area. Ramos-Lizama stated she was physically mistreated by CRUZ-Roman and that he threatened to kill her and feed her to the pigs when she asked when she would be smuggled further north. Ramos-Lizama stated CRUZ-Roman would shock her with an electrical device as well.

HSI McAllen discovered, via money transfers and interviews, that CRUZ-Roman's wife, Crystal Bernice RODRIGUEZ, received Ramos-Lizama's \$1,600 smuggling fee from the recipients of the wire transfer.

On January 30, 2015, the Penitas Police Department (PPD) conducted a traffic stop of a Chevrolet Avalanche driven by RODRIGUEZ and Ever Armando Violante-Mendez was the front seat passenger.

RODRIGUEZ was read her Miranda Rights, which she waived, and stated that she picked up Ramos-Lizama's \$1,600 smuggling fee from the recipients of the wire transfer and gave the money to CRUZ-Roman. RODRIGUEZ stated she knew the \$1,600 was money paid so that Ramos-Lizama could be further smuggled into the United States.

Violante-Mendez, a citizen of Mexico with no legal status to be in the United States, stated he illegally entered the United States approximately one month ago and asked RODRIGUEZ if he could work for her. Violante-Mendez stated he worked for RODRIGUEZ and her husband, who agents identified as CRUZ-Roman, for approximately four weeks at RODRIGUEZ and CRUZ-Roman's car wash. Violante-Mendez stated he slept at RODRIGUEZ and CRUZ-Roman's house in the same room as Ramos-Lizama. Violante-Mendez stated Ramos-Lizama stated to him on multiple times that she wanted to leave but didn't feel that she was able to since she didn't know anybody in the area. Violante-Mendez stated Ramos-Lizama stated to him that CRUZ-Roman would shock her with an electrical device.

Violante-Mendez was shown 6 person photo line-ups in which he positively identified CRUZ-Roman.

Ramos-Lizama was shown 6 person photo line-ups in which she positively identified RODRIGUEZ and CRUZ-Roman.